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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DATE: October 14, 2008

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Administrators

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan 

SUBJECT: 21st Century Small High School Grants

Section 11n of the State School Aid Act of 2008, (MCL 388.1699p) authorizes the establishment of a 21st Century Schools Fund with an allocation of \$15,000,000. The goal of the 21st Century Schools Fund is to provide grants to eligible school districts to help replace large, failing high schools that have low graduation rates, with small high schools that engage students in learning. The new small high schools will be based on research-proven designs that emphasize strong personal relationships, rigorous academics, and relevance to the world of work. The students graduating from these schools will be prepared to succeed in college or other postsecondary education and on the job.

The intent of the 21st Century Schools Fund is to help eligible districts advance their high school reform goals. We expect that districts will be at different levels of readiness and capacity and will be at different stages of their reform processes. The proposal process will account for this by offering districts the opportunity to apply for either a planning or an implementation grant and to indicate the need for other types of support on the attached *District Readiness Self-Assessment Framework*. Districts funded for the first round of implementation grants will be expected to open new high schools for the 2009-10 school year.

Eligible districts and public school academies (see attached list and grant criteria) are invited to participate in a multi-step application process for 21st Century Schools Fund grants to support comprehensive high school transformation efforts. Process for grant application:

- Submit letter of intent for planning or implementation grant and *District Readiness Self-Assessment Framework* by **November 7, 2008**
- Participate in technical assistance and information meeting
- Submit complete proposal for a planning grant or an implementation grant

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October 14, 2008
Page Two

The *District Readiness Self-Assessment Framework* must be used to assess school readiness to submit a competitive grant proposal and/or provide the opportunity to identify areas where your district requires additional support. After a review of the *District Readiness Self-Assessment Framework*, districts may be contacted by the Michigan Department of Education to attend a technical assistance and information meeting in order to determine the best steps for the district to apply for a 21st Century Schools Fund grant. Grant submission instructions will be provided after the technical assistance meeting.

Submit your letter of intent and *District Readiness Self-Assessment Framework* to:

Michigan Department of Education
Office of the Superintendent
21st Century School Fund
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909

Hand delivered material will not be accepted. The *District Readiness Self-Assessment Framework*, instructions, and a list of eligible districts are posted on the MDE Grants web page at <http://michigan.gov/mde-grants>, under the "What's New" section.

If you have questions, please contact MaryAlice Galloway at 517-241-4185 or gallowaym@michigan.gov.

Attachments

Grant Criteria for 21st Century Fund Grants

Eligible Applicants

- Cohort graduation rate for district is below 70% or majority of enrolled pupils in public school academy reside in such a district
- Preference for proposals that implement strategies to prepare middle school students for high school **or**
- School or learning community includes grades 6-12
- No more than 1/3 of grants to public school academies

Grant award may be up to \$3 million per project to eligible applicants

- Funds must be distributed over a 4 year period
- For planning and start-up for newly constructed or newly configured schools or learning communities and renovation of existing facilities

Grant Proposal Criteria

- Commitment of private matching funds at least equal to the amount of the grant
- School must provide open enrollment if there are more applicants than seats
- Maximum of 110 pupils in each grade (9-12) and average of 75 per grade
- Incorporate a relationship-building goal (teachers, students, parents and administration)
- Statement of commitment to site-based management
- Percentage of budget earmarked for evaluation
- Preferred: Identification of intermediary/school developer partner

Success Criteria

- By the time the third graduating class from the new high school completes, these targets must be met
 - 80% graduation rate as determined by CEPI/MDE
 - At least 80% of graduates enrolled in post secondary education within 6 months
- Failure to meet success criteria will result in repayment of 50% of grant award